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subject: Shabbat Shalom from the OU

Celebrate Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
February 26, 2014

If leaders are to bring out the best in those they lead, they must give them the chance to show they are capable of great things, and then they must celebrate their achievements. That is what happens at a key moment toward the end of our parsha, one that brings the book of Exodus to a sublime conclusion after all the strife that has gone before.

The Israelites have finally completed the work of building the Tabernacle. We then read:

So all the work on the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was completed. The Israelites did everything just as the Lord commanded Moses ... Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the Lord had commanded. So Moses blessed them. (Ex. 39: 32, 43)

The passage sounds simple enough, but to the practised ear it recalls another biblical text, from the end of the creation narrative in Genesis:

The heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. On the seventh day God finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Gen. 2: 1-3)

Three key words appear in both passages: "work," "completed" and "blessed." These verbal echoes are not accidental. They are how the Torah signals intertextuality, that is, hinting that one law or story is to be read in the context of another. In this case the Torah is emphasizing that Exodus ends as Genesis began, with a work of creation. Note the difference as well as the similarity. Genesis began with an act of Divine creation. Exodus ends with an act of human creation.

The closer we examine the two texts, the more we see how intricately the parallel has been constructed. The creation account in Genesis is tightly organised around a series of sevens. There are seven days of creation. The word "good" appears seven times, the word "God" thirty-

five times, and the word "earth" twenty-one times. The opening verse of Genesis contains seven words, the second fourteen, and the three concluding verses 35 words. The complete text is 469 (7x67) words.

The account of the construction of the Tabernacle in Vayakhel-Pekudei is similarly built around the number seven. The word "heart" appears seven times in Exodus 35: 5-29, as Moses specifies the materials to be used in the construction, and seven times again in 35: 34 – 36: 8, the description of how the craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiav were to carry out the work. The word *terumah*, "contribution" appears seven times in this section. In chapter 39, describing the making of the priestly vestments, the phrase "as God commanded Moses" occurs seven times. It occurs again seven times in chapter 40.

A remarkable parallel is being drawn between God's creation of the universe and the Israelites' creation of the Sanctuary. We now understand what the Sanctuary represented. It was a micro-cosmos, a universe in miniature, constructed with the same precision and "wisdom" as the universe itself, a place of order as against the formlessness of the wilderness and the ever-threatening chaos of the human heart. The Sanctuary was a visible reminder of God's presence within the camp, itself a metaphor for God's presence within the universe as a whole.

A large and fateful idea is taking shape. The Israelites, who have been portrayed throughout much of Exodus as ungrateful and half-hearted, have now been given the opportunity, after the sin of the golden calf, to show that they are not irredeemable. They are capable of great things. They have shown they can be creative. They have used their generosity and skill to build a mini-universe. By this symbolic act they have shown they are capable of becoming, in the potent rabbinic phrase, "God's partners in the work of creation."

This was fundamental to their re-moralization and to their self-image as the people of God's covenant. Judaism does not take a low view of human possibility. We do not believe we are tainted by original sin. We are not incapable of moral grandeur. To the contrary, the very fact that we are in the image of the Creator means that we – uniquely among life forms – have the ability to be creative. As Israel's first creative achievement reached its culmination Moses blessed them, saying, according to the sages, "May it be God's will that His presence rests in the work of your hands." [1] Our potential greatness is that we can create structures, relationships and lives that become homes for the Divine presence.

Blessing them and celebrating their achievement, Moses showed them what they could be. That is potentially a life-changing experience. Here is a contemporary example.

In 2001, shortly after 9/11, I received a letter from a woman in London whose name I did not immediately recognise. The morning of the attack on the World Trade Centre, I had been giving a lecture on ways of raising the status of the teaching profession, and she had seen a report about it in the press. This prompted her to write and remind me of a meeting we had had eight years earlier.

She was then, in 1993, head-teacher of the school that was floundering. She had heard some of my broadcasts, felt a kinship with what I had to say, and thought that I might have the answer to her problem. I invited her, together with two of her deputies, to our house. The story she told me was this: morale within the school, among teachers, pupils and parents alike, was at an all-time low. Parents had been withdrawing their children. The student roll had fallen from 1000 children to 500. Examination results were bad: only 8 per cent of students achieved high grades. It was clear that unless something changed dramatically, the school would have to close.

We talked for an hour or so on general themes: the school as community, how to create an ethos, and so on. Suddenly, I realised that we were thinking along the wrong lines. The problem she faced was practical, not philosophical. I said: 'I want you to live one word – celebrate.' She turned to me with a sigh: 'You don't understand – we

have nothing to celebrate. Everything in the school is going wrong.’ ‘In that case’, I replied, ‘find something to celebrate. If a single student has done better this week than last week, celebrate. If someone has a birthday, celebrate. If it’s Tuesday, celebrate.’ She seemed unconvinced, but promised to give the idea a try.

Now, eight years later, she was writing to tell me what had happened since then. Examination results at high grades had risen from 8 to 65 per cent. The roll of pupils had risen from 500 to 1000. Saving the best news to last, she added that she had just been made a Dame of the British Empire – one of the highest honours the Queen can bestow – for her contribution to education. She ended by saying that she just wanted me to know how one word had changed the school and her life.

She was a wonderful teacher, and certainly did not need my advice. She would have discovered the answer on her own anyway. But I was never in any doubt that the strategy would succeed. We grow to fill other people’s expectations of us. If they are low, we remain small. If they are high, we walk tall.

The idea that each of us has a fixed quantum of intelligence, virtue, academic ability, motivation and drive is absurd. Not all of us can paint like Monet or compose like Mozart. But we each have gifts, capacities, that can lie dormant a throughout life, until someone awakes them. We can achieve heights of which we never thought ourselves capable. All it takes is for us to meet someone who believes in us, challenges us, and then, when we have responded to the challenge, blesses and celebrates our achievements. That is what Moses did for the Israelites after the sin of the golden calf. First he got them to create, and then he blessed them and their creation with one of the simplest and most moving of all blessings, that the Shekhinah should dwell in the work of their hands.

Celebration is an essential part of motivating. It turned a school around. In an earlier age and in a more sacred context it turned the Israelites around. When we celebrate the achievements of others, we change lives.

[1] Sifre, Bamidbar, Pinhas, 143.

from: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Thu, Feb 27, 2014 at 5:05 PM subject: Shabbat Shalom from the OU

Each and Every Day
Rabbi Eliyahu Safran
February 24, 2014

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind. – Albert Einstein

Central to the narrative in Shemot is the transformation of the people into the nation of Israel from the remnants of our slavery. Through the early parashiyot of Shemot through Bo and Beshalach, the people prepare for the exodus and final escape from the long years of slavery. When we arrive at Yitro and Mishpatim something even more powerful begins to happen; our physical freedom that has been the focus of the parashiyot becomes a more spiritual transformation. A people escapes slavery, a nation begins to form in the desert. By the time our reading arrives at Yitro and Mishpatim, we find ourselves in the midst of the transformation from our physical freedom to spiritual independence and exclusiveness.

How is this new spiritual independence communicated to us? Through the building of a mikdash, a space where God’s spirit will reside permanently among us. However, just as our physical freedom was not realized without setbacks, our spiritual development was challenged from the outset. Ki-Tisa shows us Israel like an unfaithful bride under the chupah; seeking a golden calf.

Like individuals, communities face crisis, error and sin. And, like individuals, how a community responds to its inevitable misdeeds and failures define it more than the initial missteps. It is only after the

tragedy of the golden calf that we build the mikdash. In Vayakhel-Pekudei, we implement the plans and ideals previously outlined and welcome God into our midst.

What a glorious moment! The heavens should open with the singing of angels! Yet, that is not how Shemot, this monumental book of Jewish existence closes. Instead, we read endless details of the building of the mikdash. We long for the beautiful image but we get spec sheets and blueprints.

The Abravanel weighs in against disappointment. He notes that the Torah records on five occasions in both a detailed and general way the construction of the Tabernacle. The most puzzling being the one when Moses said to Israel, “And let every wise man among you come and make all that the Lord hath commanded, the Tabernacle, its tent...” going on to detail everything God commanded them to do.

Wouldn’t it have been enough to have ended with the words, “and make all that God hath commanded”? We have to ask ourselves, Why the repetition?

The emphasis upon detail is conspicuous throughout the Sidrah. The Torah informs us eighteen times that the Israelites followed the instructions they were given, “just as God commanded Moses.” Eighteen times! Even if we agree it is important to know the many and varied details to build the mikdash, why repeat the words verbatim eighteen times? Certainly once would have sufficed!

Ramban and Or Ha-Chayyim agree that the reason for the repetition is similar “to that advanced by our Sages with regard to the recapitulations of Abraham’s servant Eliezer. Since the story was so precious to Him, it was recorded twice over. Similarly, the story of the Tabernacle was recorded twice because it was beloved by Him.”

But the repetition of Eliezer’s conversation is not relayed, as the story of the mikdash, verbatim. The additions and variations between the original story and Eliezer’s reports add to the narrative and lessons we take from the repetition. In this case, “it was beloved by Him,” because even without the additions and variations, “the table-talk of the Patriarchs’ servants was more precious to the Holy One than the Torah of their descendants.” God enjoys even the “repeats” of those who find themselves in the company of the Avot in the same way a grandparent enjoys hearing stories of their grandchildren from people who have seen them.

We understand God’s pleasure in Eliezer’s reports. But what enjoyment could He derive, however, from a dry repeat of the Tabernacle’s construction? Great enjoyment as it turns out! One of God’s great pleasures is in anticipating man’s ability, inner strength, and power to repent, “for His right hand is stretched out to receive the penitent.” God knows only too well man’s nature which leads him to sin.

That is the reason for God’s greatest kindness to man – teshuvah. Therefore God enjoys approaching man with a spirit of forgiveness. He is the “gracious One, who pardons abundantly.”

The repetition of the instructions to build the mikdash is not simply a rerun but a gesture of God’s love for His children, who were emotionally and spiritually crushed after making the golden calf. In their fallen state, they hear once again the call to build the mikdash, where God’s presence will rest. Their spirits are rejuvenated. “It was beloved by Him.” The passion to build the mikdash overwhelmed the sin of the egel.

God’s enjoyment at seeing His people enthusiastically repent brought forth a renewed call to build the mikdash – not just a revisiting of old feelings. “It was beloved by Him” to again be able to give instructions to a spiritually resurrected people, knowing that now they would respond “just as He commanded.”

“I am the Lord before man sins, and I am the Lord after man sins.”

The “repetition” of all the mikdash’s details and specifications is the call of God “after man sins.” As such, it is a new call. Why? Because it is heard by a people with a new understanding, a people whose

awareness of God is far greater after he sins than before. God does not change before or after man sins, but man does.

Repetition resonates then.

But still, eighteen times?

It is in this continual repetition that we learn one of the great lessons of life. We live in at a time when experience is reduced to sound bites and our deepest emotions are expressed in 140 characters or less. In such a context, it is hard to remember that life is not defined by remarkable “moments” but by a lifetime of moments. Singular and heroic deeds astonish, but it is in the steady, day by day repetition of detailed duties and simple, good deeds that the fullness of a life is realized.

Arriving at the mountain’s peak is not accomplished by a single, daring leap but by the methodical climb up the mountainside, step-by-step, cutback by cutback.

We praise the brilliant essay, but I would ask Who deserves the greater commendation, the student who wrote the singular piece or the conscientious student who day in, day out performs to the best of his abilities? The one-time million dollar philanthropist or the consistent, caring giver of more modest means who makes a point to contribute regularly to every important charitable cause? Do we only laud the one who leaps into turbulent waters to save the life of a child or do we also applaud the one whose daily life is filled with good deeds, each in and of itself a small pearl to be sure, but which, over a lifetime, form a beautiful necklace of such pearls?

What is the greater challenge, a moment of brilliance or a consistent, ongoing goodness?

Moses saw greatness in the human achievement of little things; in the exact and precise execution of instructions, in self-discipline, and in faithful and caring attention to every detail, “and Moses looked over-all the work, and behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so they had done it, and Moses blessed them.”

Blessing is a recognition of those details.

It is in the particular that we see the Divine. When we eat an apple, we say a blessing because of that apple. When God created humankind, He did not create multitudes, but rather one man and one woman; their value equal to the worth of the entire world. Heroism is not required to achieve greatness. “He who saves one soul is considered to have saved an entire world.”

Judaism’s primary concern is the singular, the individual, the detail.

The Jerusalem Talmud likens the repetition of God’s instructions for the mikdash eighteen times “just as God commanded” to the eighteen blessings of the Shmone Esreh. At first glance, the comparison seems only cursory, a numerical agreement. But looking closer, we see that the Shmone Esreh, more than any other Jewish prayer, teaches us that life is not a mishmash of universal generalities or one-time needs and pleasures but the recognition that a particular God, who is capable of providing and responding to every single one of our very many detailed and specific personalized needs and requests, hears our very particular prayer.

The wisdom required by one is not the wisdom sought by the other. My frailty requires a different forgiveness from yours. The healing needed by one is different from the therapy required by another. Prayer is an individual religious experience because as the details of requests vary, so do the details of the response. We pray to God, because only He can relate and respond to our unique, particular needs, “For He alone is the poel g’vurot, oseh chadashot, ba’al milchamot, zorea tzedakot, matzmiach yeshuot, boreh refuot.”

God wants us to imitate His ways. Just as He must pay attention to the most minute of human needs, so He expects and anticipates that we too will live not by generalities or universal truths but rather by heeding the call of Divine details. Our life is as a mikdash. When we do, we have claim to compare our ways to His and we find ourselves walking “...in His ways”.

From: Ohr Somayach ohr@ohr.edu

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subject: Insights into Halacha - A Tale of Two Adars

A Tale of Two Adars

by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

Parshat Pekudei Ohrnet

As the month of Adar is the only one in the Jewish calendar that gets twinned (7 years out of every 19)[1], every time such a leap year occurs, aside for the ‘Mishenichnas Adar’ celebrations, there is also cause for concern and calculations. Although the Gemara[2] concludes that all Purim-related observances (including the Arba Parshiyos) are celebrated in Adar Sheini, in order that the Geulah (Redemption) from Haman (Purim) and the Geulah from Egypt (Pesach) should be observed in consecutive months, nevertheless, figuring out in which Adar other life cycle events such as Bar Mitzvahs and Yahrzeits should be observed, is quite complicated.

Who Is Truly Older?

It is widely known that adding a leap year into the mix always has interesting Bar Mitzvah ramifications. The majority consensus is that if a boy was born in a non-leap year, one in which there was only one Adar, and on the year of his Bar Mitzvah there are two Adars, his Bar Mitzvah will occur in the second Adar, since it is considered the true one concerning when one becomes a man[3]. The same holds true if the lad was actually born in Adar Sheini. In fact the only way one would celebrate a Bar Mitzvah in the first Adar is if he was actually born in an Adar Rishon. This is the accepted ruling by all authorities, both Ashkenazic and Sefardic.

This makes for a remarkable dichotomy. If one boy is born on the 21st of Adar Rishon, and his buddy a week and a half later on the 2nd of Adar Sheini, then in any standard year following, the second one would be celebrating his birthday almost 3 weeks before his “older” friend. Since there is only one Adar, the second-born’s birthday would be the 2nd of Adar while his “older” friend’s would be on the 21st. In fact, only in a leap year would the older one truly be considered older. This would also affect their Bar Mitzvahs. If their Bar Mitzvah is in a standard year, the younger lad would become a man several weeks before his older compadre[4].

Yearly Yahrzeit

However, and quite interestingly, Yahrzeit observance seems to be an entirely different story. The Shulchan Aruch rules that if one’s parent passed away in a standard Adar his Yahrzeit should be observed in Adar Sheini (similar to the accepted psak for a Bar Mitzvah). Yet, the Rema, citing the Terumas HaDeshen and Mahar”i Mintz[5], argues that Yahrzeits do not share the same status as Bar Mitzvahs, and conversely they should be observed in Adar Rishon.

Will the Real Adar Please Stand Up?

The Terumas HaDeshen[6] posits that this machlokes is actually based on another one: between R’ Meir and R’ Yehuda concerning which Adar is considered the main one[7] (regarding the laws of Nedarim and Shtaros - Vows and Documents). The Rambam follows R’ Meir’s opinion, that Adar Sheini is the main one, while most other Rishonim, including the Rosh, Ritva and Ran[8], follow R’ Yehuda (as is the general rule in Shas), and consider Adar Rishon to be the main one. Apparently, regarding Yahrzeits the Shulchan Aruch sides with the Rambam while the Rema follows the opinions of the other Rishonim.

Another understanding of this machlokes is that it is based on conflicting Talmudic dictums. Since it is a mitzvah to properly observe a parent’s Yahrzeit[9], wouldn’t we say ‘Ain Maavirin al HaMitzvos’[10], not to let a mitzvah pass us by? If so, we certainly should attempt to do so as soon as possible, i.e. Adar Rishon and not wait until Adar Sheini.

Yet, others claim ‘Akdumei Paranus Lo Mekadmin’[11] might be more important here, as we find with Tisha B’Av and other fast days where, when a scheduling conflict arises, we delay the fast. Similarly, since the accepted practice is to fast on a Yahrzeit, its observance should be delayed to Adar Sheini.

Souled!

The Levush[12] elucidates the Rema’s ruling, stressing a critical difference between the two. Properly observing a Yahrzeit achieves repentance (Kapparah) for the soul of the deceased. The Judgement of Gehinnom is twelve months; therefore immediately after the conclusion of this period, which, in a leap year would occur in the first Adar, we should observe the Yahrzeit to obtain elevation for the Neshama. Why should we prolong his Kapparah? And once the Yahrzeit is already observed in Adar Rishon, the first year after the passing, it is already set as the one to observe every time there is a leap year.

Yet, others, including the Chasam Sofer[13], disagree, maintaining that although we find that regarding the laws of Nedarim and Shtaros, even the Shulchan Aruch concedes that Adar Rishon is considered the main Adar[14], even so, Yahrzeits should be observed in Adar Sheini. He explains that the rule in Nedarim and Shtaros is that they follow ‘lashon Bnei Adam’, the common vernacular. Since people are used to saying Adar, even in a leap year the first Adar is simply colloquially called Adar. Yet, concerning Yahrzeits, which concerns Neshamos, its observance would follow the ‘lashon HaTorah’, which clearly establishes Adar Sheini as the main Adar, as all Purim-related observances are celebrated in Adar Sheini! Therefore, he concludes that Yahrzeits should be observed in Adar Sheini.

Double Yahrzeit ?

Generally speaking, the practical halacha here follows the traditional paths after the main halacha codifiers. Sefardim, who follow the psakim of the Shulchan Aruch, observe an Adar Yahrzeit in Adar Sheini, while Ashkenazim would do so in Adar Rishon[15]. Yet, there are several Ashkezaic poskim who rule like the Shulchan Aruch here, maintaining that a Yahrzeit should be observed in Adar Sheini[16].

But, to make matters even more confusing, the Rema adds that there are those who maintain that Yahrzeits should be observed in both Adars (!!). Although in Hilchos Aveilus, the Rema seems to have dropped this opinion as a viable option, nevertheless, it is a psak that several later authorities, including the Shach, Magen Avraham and the Vilna Gaon, aver is required. In fact, and although the Aruch Hashulchan discounts this opinion, as this is not a matter of prohibition and therefore a chumra is non-applicable, still, the Mishna Berura writes that if possible one should try to observe the Yahrzeit on both days[17].

So, what is one to do? He should ask his Rav and follow his shul’s local minhag. Recently, while in America for a simcha, this author noticed a highly commendable and helpful sign hanging in the famed White Shul in Far Rockaway, signed by the Rav, Rabbi Eitan Feiner, with clear and concise instructions to enable easy Yahrzeit observance during the months of Adar. It proclaimed that the shul follows Ashkenazic practice. Therefore, Yahrzeit observance for one who was niftar in a regular Adar should be in Adar Rishon. If the mourner is Sefardi, he should observe the Yahrzeit in Adar Sheini. If one’s minhag is to observe both Adars, he may do so, as long as it does not interfere with someone else’s actual Yahrzeit (i.e. davening for the amud).

Yes, Mishenichnas Adar Marbin B’Simcha[18], but sometimes that simcha is reserved for resolving halachic doubt[19].

Postscript: Another interesting related issue is that even though the universal psak is that a Bar Mitzvah is of a boy born in a standard Adar is celebrated in Adar Sheini, nonetheless, there are poskim who maintain that the Bar Mitzvah boy should start to lay Tefillin from Adar Rishon, even if his minhag is not to do so until the Bar Mitzvah itself. In fact, the Tzitz Eliezer opines that it is for a leap year like this that the minhag developed to lay Tefillin a month before their Bar Mitzvah[20]. Just

another tidbit to add more calculations and complications to a year with double Adars.

[1]See Gemara Rosh Hashana 7a and Gemara Sanhedrin 12b. There are several sevaros explaining why only Adar gets doubled. See Rashi (Rosh Hashana ad loc. s.v. v’afap”ch), Tosafos (Sanhedrin ad loc. s.v. ein), Kedushas Levi (Parshas Ki Sisa s.v. ta’am) and Sfias Emes (Likutum L’Chodesh Adar).

[2]Gemara Megillah 6b.

[3]Rema (O.C. 55, 10; based on Shu”t Mahar”i Mintz 15), Levush (O.C. 685, 1), Magen Avraham (O.C. 55, 10), Pri Chadash (ad loc. 10), Pri Megadim (ad loc. E.A. 10; he adds that m’pautus this is also the Shulchan Aruch’s shitta), Levushei Srad (ad loc. s.v. eino), Korban Ha’Eida (Megillah Ch. 1, Shiyarei HaKorban s.v. hada), Shaarei Teshuva (O.C. 55, 11), Gilyon Maharsha (Y”D 402, s.v. b’Adar), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (15, 2), Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 55, 14), Mishna Berura (ad loc. 45), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 59); not like the Mahara”Sh HaLevi (Shu”t O.C. 16) who was of the opinion that all observances should be celebrated in Adar Rishon.

[4]Although the Magen Avraham (ibid., based on his understanding of the Mahar”i Mintz’s position) maintains that even a boy born in an Adar Rishon’s Bar Mitzva gets deferred to Adar Sheini, and the Olas HaTamid agrees with him. Nevertheless, the consensus of poskim is that the Bar Mitzva of one who is born in an Adar Rishon is observed in Adar Rishon as well; if he was born in a standard Adar or Adar Sheini his Bar Mitzva would be observed in Adar Sheini. These poskim include the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.), Levush (O.C. 685, 1), Pri Chadash (ad loc. 10; citing the Yerushami Megillah Ch. 1, 5, that Adar Rishon is merely a ‘tosefes’), Shvus Yaakov (Shu”t vol. 1, 9; who writes that the Magen Avraham misunderstood the Mahar”i Mintz), Elya Rabba (O.C. 55, 9 & Elya Zuta 5), Rav Dovid Oppenheim (cited in the Ba’er Heitiv ad loc. 11), Me’il Tzadaka (Shu”t 21), Shaarei Teshuva (O.C. 55, 11), Ma’amar Mordechai (ad loc. 13), Pri Megadim (ad loc. E.A. 10), Ikrei HaDat (3, 7), Maharsham (Daas Torah ad loc. s.v. u’shnas), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (15, 2), Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 55, 14), Mishna Berura (ad loc. 43), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 59). The Ba’er Heitiv (ibid.) concludes that “v’chein minhag pashut eitzel kol ba’alei hahora’ah”! On an anecdotal level, this halacha affected this author growing up, as my birthday was Rosh Chodesh Adar and my Bar Mitzvah occurred on a leap year. B’Ezras Hashem, it will affect my son who was born on my birthday as well, as his upcoming Bar Mitzvah is scheduled for the next leap year - in Adar Sheini 5776!

[5]Shulchan Aruch and Rema (O.C. 568, 7), Terumas HaDeshen (vol. 1, 294), Mahar”i Mintz (Shu”t 9). Interestingly, in his Beis Yosef commentary (end O.C. 568), the Shulchan Aruch writes that that this opinion of such a Yahrzeit being observed in Adar Sheini, is the ruling of the Mahara”i Weil (Shu”t Dinin V’Halachos 5; who was arguing on the Mahara”i Mulin).

[6]Terumas HaDeshen (vol. 1, 294). His assessment of the dispute is widely acknowledged as the proper one and is cited by many later authorities as a given.

[7]Nedarim 63a. Application of this dispute is if one writes a document listing only the month as Adar, which Adar was he referring to? The same applies to vows as well. If one made a Neder not to eat meat until Adar, until when is meat prohibited to him?

[8]Rambam (Hilchos Nedarim Ch. 10, 6; especially according to the Kesef Mishna’s understanding), Rosh, Ritva, and Ran in their commentaries to Nedarim 63a. Interestingly, Tosafos (Nedarim 63b s.v. v’hatanya) implies like the Rambam as well.

[9]See Shulchan Aruch (Y”D 402, 12).

[10]See Gemara Pesachim 64b, Yoma 33a, 58b, and 70a, Megillah 6b, and Menachos 64b.

[11]See Gemara Megillah 5b, regarding pushing off Tisha B’Av. The Ramban (Milchemos Hashem to end of the first Chapter of Megillah) adds that this applies as well to Taanis Esther. Although the Maharil (Shu”t 1120) writes that this is inapplicable to a Yahrzeit as it is only ‘Tzaara B’Alma’, nevertheless the Chasam Sofer reiterates this sevara several times. See Shu”t Chasam Sofer (O.C. 163 s.v. v’hinei), Haghos Chasam Sofer (to Shulchan Aruch O.C. 568, 7), and Chiddushei Chasam Sofer (to Gemara Megillah 5a). Thanks are due to Rav Yitzchok Breitowitz for pointing out this debate regarding Klalei HaShas to this author.

[12]See Levush (O.C. 685, 1), Shu”t Beis Shlomo (E.H. 56, Hagha”h M’Ben HaMechaber 1), and Shu”t Har Tzvi (O.C. vol. 2, 83, 1; quoting the Mahar”i Mintz).

[13]See Shu”t Chasam Sofer (O.C. 163) and Haghos Chasam Sofer (to O.C. 568, 7). The Vilna Gaon (Biar HaGr’a to O.C. 568, 7 s.v. k’she’ira) cites this as well.

[14]Regarding Nedarim see Shulchan Aruch (Y”D 220, 8); regarding Documents see Shulchan Aruch (C.M. 43, 28); regarding Gittin see Shulchan Aruch (E.H. 126, 7). In all of these cases he agrees that the halacha follows R’ Yehuda that one who writes/says ‘Adar’ is referring to Adar Rishon. These cases all follow ‘Lashon Bnei Adam’, the common vernacular. Interestingly, he does not follow the Rambam in these cases [see how the Chelkas Mechokek and Bais Shmuel (to E.H. 126, 7) deal with this difficulty].

[15]Most Sefardic poskim follow the Shulchan Aruch and observe this Yahrzeit in Adar Sheini, include the Knesses HaGedolah (O.C. 568, Haghos on Beis Yosef), Chida (Machzik Bracha ad loc. 8), Yafeh LaLev (vol. 2, ad loc. 4) and Rav Daniel Tirani (Ikrei HaDat 29, 4). See Kaf Hachaim (O.C. 568, 76), Chazon Ovadia (Purim ppg. 32 - 34), and Rav Mordechai Elyahu’s Darchei Halacha glosses to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (221, 3) whom all state this.

[16]Although the Yaavetz implies in his responsa (Shu”t Sheilas Yaavetz vol. 1, 117) like the Rema, in his later Siddur (Siddur Yaavetz pg. 375a) he concludes like his father, the Chacham Tzvi, that such a Yahrzeit should be observed in Adar Sheini. As mentioned previously, the Chasam Sofer (Shu”t O.C. 163 and Haghos to O.C. 568, 7) and Korban Ha’Eida (Megillah Ch. 1, Shiyarei HaKorban s.v. hada) were major proponents of this, as well. The Melamed L’Hoyeel (Shu”t O.C. 113, 1 & end 116) also follows the Chasam Sofer on this. Additionally, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu”t Igros Moshe Y”D vol. 3, 160, 1) implies that the Ikar truly is Adar Sheini for Yahrzeits, as it should be the same as Bar Mitzvahs, all rationale proving otherwise notwithstanding. [Rav Ovadia Yosef (Chazon Ovadia - Purim ppg. 34), expresses a similar sentiment. However, l’halacha Rav Moshe holds that one should observe the Yahrzeit in both Adars - see footnote 17.] Yet, it must be stressed that most Ashkenazic poskim follow the Rema’s shitta and maintain that the Yahrzeit should be observed in Adar Rishon. These

include the Mahari (Shu"t 31), Mahari"i Mintz (ibid.), Terumas HaDeshen (ibid.), Levush (ibid.), Elyah Rabba (O.C. 685, 7 & Elyah Zutah ad loc. 7), Taz (O.C. 568, 3), Chayei Adam (132, 37), Yeshuos Yaakov (ad loc. 4), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (221, 3), Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 568, 13 & 14), Shu"t Maharam Brisk (vol. 1, 128), Shu"t Har Tzvi (ibid.) and Shu"t Moadim U'Zmanim (vol. 7, end 250). The Mishna Berura (568, 42) as well, implies that regarding Yahrzeit Adar Rishon is Ikar.

[17]The Rema in O.C. 568, 7 adds that there are those who are machmir to observe a Yahrzeit in both Adars. Yet, in Y"D 402, 12, he repeats this halacha, while only mentioning that one should observe the Yahrzeit in Adar Sheini! Nevertheless, several later authorities, including the Shach (Y"D 402, 11; quoting the Rashal and Bach) as well as the Magen Avraham (O.C. 568, 20) and the Vilna Gaon (Biur HaGr"a to O.C. 568, 7 s.v. shnayhem) hold that one must observe the Yahrzeit in both Adars; the Gr"a even mandating it m'din. Although the Aruch Hashulchan (ibid.) writes strongly against what is essentially observing two Yahrzeits for one person, nevertheless, the Mishna Berura (ad loc. 42), Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu"t Igros Moshe Y"D vol. 3, 160, 1), and Rav Moshe Sternbuch (Shu"t Moadim U'Zmanim (vol. 7, end 250) maintain that it is proper to observe a Yahrzeit in both Adars if a parent was niftar in a standard Adar.

[18]Gemara Taanis 29a.

[19]Metzudas Dovid (Mishlei Ch. 15, 30 s.v. me'ohr einayim) 'Ha'aras Einayim B'Davar HameSupak Yismach Lev Ki Ain B'Olam Simcha K'Hataras HaSafeikos! This saying is also cited by the Pri Megadim (O.C. beg. 670, E.A. s.v. nohagin and O.C. 682, M.Z. end 1) regarding why on Chanuka (as we say in Al HaNissim) it is fitting that the 'Zeidim' were given over to the 'Oskei Torasecha'.

[20]See Shu"t Beis Shlomo (Even Ha'ezer 56) who maintains that such an Adar Bar Mitzvah boy should be machmir to start laying Tefillin a month and a day prior to his actual Bar Mitzvah in Adar Sheini. Although not everyone follows his chiddush, it is cited by many poskim I'maaseh. See Shu"t Shevet HaLevi (vol. 6, 9 and vol. 10, 105, 2), Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer (vol. 13, 10 s.v. ela & u'chyadua), Shu"t Moadim U'Zmanim (vol. 7, 250 s.v. v'ch"z & u'la'd), Orchos Chaim (Spinka, 37), Igros HaKodesh (5717, vol. 14, 243, postscript), and Shu"t L'Horos Nosson (vol. 12, 5). Thanks are due to R' Shloimie Lerner for pointing out and providing these invaluable sources.

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Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>

reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com

subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Blog :: Rabbi Berel Wein

A Sad, Sad World

There is a well-known anecdote/legend that circulates in the Mussar/yeshiva circles about a young yeshiva student who left the yeshiva world and its environment to find his fortune in far distant fields. At the time that he left the yeshiva he had a beard and dressed modestly as was his Jewish tradition.

A decade later he met by chance on the street the head of his former yeshiva. The former student now was completely clean-shaven and dressed in the most modern and fashionable garb of the time.

Nevertheless, the old mentor recognized his former student and engaged him in conversation.

He innocently asked him: "Since I am not a man of the world and you obviously are, would you please answer a few questions that I have about the outside society? Are most people happy or depressed? Are most people satisfied with their wealth or do they consider themselves to be poor? Are most people psychologically well adjusted or are they anxious and sometimes almost insane?

And finally, are most people physically healthy or are they afflicted with disease, discomfort and some sort of illness?" The student was taken aback by this conversation but he dutifully replied: "Master, I must admit the truth to you. Most people are not happy, they do not consider themselves wealthy no matter how much money they have, many psychologists and therapists are doing a thriving business because a great deal of the world is dysfunctional and even somewhat crazy, and those that are sick and ill, in pain and in anxiety, far outnumber those who consider themselves completely healthy, normal and well-adjusted." To which the mentor commented: "So for such a sad, depressed, sick, poor world you removed your beard?!

In our daily prayers we state: "That we should not toil for emptiness and nothingness nor should we have been born to be confused and depressed." Judaism does not negate the outside world. It is a practical

religion that deals with life as it is and does not make unrealistic demands upon its adherents.

So even though the outside world may be one of poverty, mental strain, physical pain and suffering and constant frustration; that is the world that we live in. We are not to shut ourselves in lonely solitude and become hermits. But, as I have often pointed out in these columns, Judaism is always a religion of balance.

And the balance here is not to allow us to remove our beard, so to speak, because of the pressures of the outside world and our desire to conform to its current standards and political correctness.

Like hundreds of millions, if not even billions of others. I own a cell phone. I rarely use it and for most of the time it is in the off mode. I do so purposely because I still value human conversation face-to-face. My grandchildren all text – they cannot spell correctly and many times are flustered when having to actually communicate with another human being on a personal and face-to-face basis.

The outside world tells me that I am a Neanderthal, a relic of a long past era. Maybe so, but I am not willing to 'shave my beard' on this issue. It represents to me a very advanced technological world that is innately sad, poor, disconnected and in very many cases very dysfunctional. Ukraine, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Congo, Zimbabwe, Bosnia, North Korea and a host of other countries on the globe are not pleasant places to currently be in. In fact, large parts of the world and of its billions of people are enveloped in sadness, violence, injustice and death.

If one does not have principles and beliefs that transcend current events and the present situation of the outside world then one is doomed to this constant feeling of depression, tension and enormous frustration. The Torah gave us a set of principles and beliefs in order to be able to live in such an uncomfortable world and yet have a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

The Torah promised us eternal life and unending memory. The Torah deals with the myriad details of daily life and weaves them together into a tapestry of meaningful and satisfying values. The sadness of the outside world can be somewhat ameliorated by a sense of serenity and accomplishment in our inner world. Prayer, study, charity, good thoughts and good behavior are all part of building our inner world and allowing us to successfully deal with that most difficult and sad outer world. This is a daily lesson that should never be ignored.

Shabat shalom

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>

reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com

subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha Blog:: Rabbi Berel Wein

Pekudei

One of the many new but somehow always temporary buzzwords that are so beloved in our current society is "transparency." In our current world's lexicon this word has substituted for what earlier in my life our teachers used to call "accountability." No matter, the idea is the same; namely, that when it comes to public funds and positions one is held to be responsible to the nth degree for what occurs under one's aegis and watch.

In a project of such magnitude as creating the Tabernacle/Mishkan from scratch, making and collecting the necessary funds and materials, paying the workers and overseeing the construction, it is likely that it will be difficult to account for every agurah involved. Yet we see in this week's parsha that Moshe in fact did so.

The Midrash tells us that in the original accounting of receipts and expenditures, Moshe was off by one thousand shekels. Since it is likely that the value of the Tabernacle/Mishkan ran into millions of shekels one would think that being off by less than one percent regarding a project

and budget of this magnitude could easily be overlooked and certainly forgiven.

However, the necessity for transparency and accountability when it comes to public funds is so vital that Moshe cannot let the matter pass. He searches and searches and finally is able to successfully account for the previously missing one thousand shekels. This sets the standard of the Torah when it comes to public charitable funds. Excellent accounting methods must be put into place to guarantee public trust and to prevent any misuse or slipshod handling of funds donated for the public good and/or holy purposes.

Money can be a terrible thing, especially when one's ego allows one the liberty to see one's self as all-powerful and exceedingly self-righteous. Handling public funds or being in a highly respected public position creates great temptations. The basest acts of malfeasance and even thievery can be rationalized and excused for one's self.

This has been so from the beginning of time, and as we are well aware, in our generation and present leadership, both religious and political are all prone to succumb to this temptation. Yet we are also aware that there are not enough police and prosecutors in the world to completely overcome this human weakness of temptation and monetary corruption. It is interesting to note that in First Temple times when the Temple building was to be refurbished, the King had to forego any strict accounting of the funds collected by the priests for that purpose. He rather, almost ruefully, had to rely on the trustworthiness of the priests themselves in the hope that no public funds would be siphoned off into private coffers.

The great lesson here is that honesty and probity is created from within and not from without. We need police and law enforcement in order to have a livable society. But without the self-discipline of honesty and the realization that the Lord holds us accountable for every one of our activities and for every agorah of public funds that passes through our fingers - we are accountable for every bit of behavior in public service - there can be no complete victory over the temptations of wealth and office. Perhaps that is one of the reasons for all of the detail and accounting that fill this final parsha of the book of Shemot/Exodus. Let us be strong and strengthen others!

Shabat shalom

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>
to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com>
subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Parshas Pekudei

Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! They had accomplished it; as G-d had commanded, so they had done. (39:43)

The term eved Hashem, servant of Hashem, is one which is not to be taken lightly. Indeed, this is the appellation by which our quintessential leader and Rebbe of all Klal Yisrael is identified: Moshe, eved Hashem. What is the meaning of this unique term? In his commentary to the above pasuk, Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl, writes, "Moshe inspected all of the work that had been completed, and he observed that the work bore two distinct characteristics, two hallmarks which stood out above the various other attributes. First, Asu osah, "It was they who had done it." Every aspect of the Mishkan's construction, from the most minute to the most preeminent, bespoke the whole personality, the extreme devotion, the spontaneous enthusiasm, and the strength and energies of the entire nation. They did it - all of them, qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Every part of every available Jew was involved in the construction of the Mishkan.

Second, Kaasher tzivah Hashem, kein asu, "As G-d had commanded, so they had done." They subordinated all of their zeal and enthusiasm in its sum total, as well as in every detail, completely to the commands of Hashem. They made no attempt to introduce their own ideals, their own chiddushim, original, innovative additions or omissions; [The craftsmen followed Hashem's guidelines to the letter of the law.] Rather, each and every one of the craftsmen considered it his supreme accomplishment to follow instructions, to execute with obedience, to act with

scrupulous care and precision - not his own ideas - but the ideas and commandments of Hashem. This free-willed, joyous sense of obedience - reflected in both freedom in obedience and obedience in freedom, meshed together - renders one joyously aware of his own strength and ability, precisely by subordinating his personality completely to the will of Hashem. Bateil retzoncha mipnei retzono, "Nullify your will before His will": This is what constitutes the most significant and critical characteristic of sublime moral perfection in the deeds of a Jewish person. These two attributes characterize a human being as unique and morally sublime. Indeed, this person having achieved the pinnacle of service to the Almighty may now be called an eved Hashem.

A servant of Hashem is one who lives a life of spiritual integrity in which every aspect of his life's endeavor is for the purpose of - and guided by - his spiritual dimension. An individual who exemplified this persona was Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl, Mashgiach of pre-World War II Mir and later Ponevez. A student of Kelm, he personified integrity and calm, and, at the same time, intense service to Hashem. He possessed a spiritual refinement which reflected his complete control over every action in his daily endeavor.

In his eulogy for Rav Chatzkel, as he was lovingly and reverently called, Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Ponevez, said, "I have never known, as far as I could tell, a single person more honest than he was. Even if he had lived five hundred years ago, during the era of the Rishonim, he would have been considered pious. Throughout the years that I knew him, there was never an instant that he searched for some leniency. He always strove to do as much as possible and deal stringently with himself - this is the meaning of the term chasid, pious."

In describing him, Horav Shlomo Lorincz, zl, writes that his entire bearing and every aspect of his conduct bespoke his servitude to his Creator. He invested superhuman energies into this service.

When the yeshiva students filed past him on Friday night to wish him Gutt Shabbos, the Mashgiach accepted upon himself to respond to each one of them with a sincere and heartfelt blessing that they truly enjoy a Gutt Shabbos. One might ask: "So what?" Almost five hundred people walked past him each Shabbos - Friday night and Shabbos day - and none of them had any inkling that while they did so, he was channeling all of his energy into fulfilling this undertaking. He took everything seriously.

If he managed to elevate the casual Gutt Shabbos that we all toss off without a second thought into a Divine Service, it stands to reason that his daily regimen must have been replete with hundreds, perhaps even thousands, such undertakings. These spiritual efforts were not discernible to the observer and no one knew about them, but they rendered every movement he made a further link in his chain of service to Hashem. This went on daily, from early morning (he rose at five o'clock) until midnight, when he finally went to bed. He never slept during the day. This went on throughout every day of his life.

Horav Zelik Epstein, zl, once remarked that to observe the Mashgiach was to see a soldier standing at attention, ready to serve his commanding officer. Rav Chatzkel was the consummate servant.

Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! They had done it as Hashem had commanded, so had they done, and Moshe blessed them. (39:43)

The construction of the Mishkan was concluded: its various vessels and utensils were completed; the Bigdei Kodesh, Holy (Priestly) Vestments, were finished. They now brought it all before Moshe Rabbeinu to seek his blessing. Everything had been executed according to the precise instruction that he had given them. Moshe was impressed, and he gave them his blessing. He said, "Yehi ratzon, May it be the will of Hashem, that the Shechinah rest upon the work of your hands." One might think that he has achieved success, but, without the blessing, Shechinah b'maasei yedeichem, "The Divine Presence resting on the work of your hands," success is short-lived. Moshe then added another brachah, blessing, which David Hamelech later incorporated in Sefer Tehillim (90:17), Vihi noam Hashem Elokeinu aleinu, u'maasei yadeinu konena aleinu u'maasei yadeinu coneneihu, "May the pleasantness of Hashem, our G-d, be upon us; our handiwork, establish for us; our handiwork, establish it." What is the

meaning of having Hashem's Presence rest upon something which man has constructed? We all want Hashem's blessing. What changes when Hashem rests His Divine Presence upon something which we have created?

In his commentary to Sefer Tehillim, the Malbim offers a powerful insight. One who constructs a magnificent edifice has obviously transformed the physical surroundings, adding beauty and creating pleasing scenery where, quite possibly, the neighboring area had once been bleak and unappealing to the eye. Regardless of the change he engendered in the physical surroundings, he himself has not been changed one iota. Whatever he had been prior to the construction of the edifice, he continues to be afterwards. On the contrary, his ego may have expanded as a result

of the acclaim that he received. When a person achieves a milestone in Torah erudition-- he has completed a tractate of Talmud, an order of Mishnayot, or simply completed an area of learning upon which he had set his sights-- he has thereby transformed himself. He is no longer the same individual that he had been prior to the achievement. He is now a new person, having added breadth and depth to his neshamah - something which he will carry with him for the rest of his mortal life. This is what the pasuk underscores when it uses the word *aleinu*, upon us: we ask that our handiwork not only be pleasing to Hashem, but that it transform us into better, more spiritually-correct Torah Jews.

I must add that in order for this spiritual transformation to occur, one must act *l'shem Shomayim*, purely for the sake of Heaven. If, however, his handiwork is part of a personal agenda, to promote either himself or his cause, it is self-defeating. He is not acting for the mitzvah; rather, he is manipulating the mitzvah for his own vested interests. As a result, he not only does not elevate himself spiritually, but rather, he defers to his *yetzer hora*, evil-inclination, by making use of a mitzvah for personal use.

In his A Vort from Rav Pam, Rabbi Sholom Smith quotes the Rosh Yeshivah's insight into Moshe's first brachah. "May the Shechinah rest upon the work of your hands." The "work of your hands" refers to the Mishkan and its appurtenances. Is there any question that the Shechinah will rest on such holy handiwork? These were two receptacles, replete with kedushah, holiness. Moshe's brachah was superfluous concerning them. The Rosh Yeshivah explains that Moshe was alluding to a far more difficult task - one that regrettably eludes some of us. "One's hands" is a reference to the mundane work of the individual's hands: his farm, his field, his business, his individual area of professional endeavor. This is where one spends the bulk of his waking hours, where he spends a good part of his life. This is where the concern regarding spirituality becomes a greater reality. Usually there is no problem, providing, of course, that one earns his livelihood in accordance with Torah dictate, following all of the halachic/ethical rules prescribed for the Torah Jew. In such an instance, the Shechinah is "comfortable" resting in such a place, thereby bestowing Divine blessing upon this individual's worldly endeavors. It is when one skirts the law, when his dealings with his fellowman leave much to be desired from an ethical and moral perspective, that Hashem's blessings are not present.

Every person should aspire to be a *klei kibul*, receptacle worthy of retaining Hashem's blessing. Torah ethics must be our guide in everything that we do. Our moral compass must be determined by the values imparted to us from the Torah. Anything short of Torah perspective leaves us open to the challenges created by misguided embellishment.

Moshe did according to everything that Hashem commanded him, so he did. (40:16)

The construction of the Mishkan was meticulously executed with perfect order as instructed by Hashem. There was no concept of approximate size. Everything was clearly delineated to Moshe Rabbeinu, and everything was followed precisely as ordered. The Alter, zl, m'Kelm, Horav Simchah Zissel Broide, quotes the Talmud Chullin 18a in which Chazal state, "If there would be a blemish/imperfection in the Mizbayach (even) like (that of) a hair breadth, it would abrogate the kedushah, sanctity, of the Mikdash." As a result, none of the wondrous miracles that were manifest on a regular basis in the Bais Hamikdash would have occurred. Were one hairbreadth to be off -the entire Bais Hamikdash would no longer have been worthy of being the receptacle of kedushah. Moshe Rabbeinu was instructed to speak to the rock. Instead, he made a slight change: he struck the rock. The consequences that resulted from that alteration meant that the man who led us out of Egypt, who gave his life for the Je

wish People, could not enter Eretz Yisrael. This meant that we would be eventually exiled from the Land, following the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash. We have been dispersed throughout the world and slaughtered like cattle, persecuted mercilessly and hounded wherever we were - all because of that "slight change." The Alter adds that one who lives with order in his life understands how to act in his home, with his community, and with the world at large. The individual has no room for error when it comes to seder, order. The Malbim explains that the knowledge of order, knowing the reasons for connections and divisions, the relationship and interaction of each part of a whole to its neighbor, to the preceding and succeeding, is the essential element of all knowledge and the root of all wisdom. In the realm of educational studies, order is the key to unlocking many sealed passageways. It permits the individual: to grasp and comprehend the various issues in a debate; to understand the qualities, benefits and demerits of an issue; and to have access to making a proper decision. In a successful thought process, one first searches for the order, delineating how everything is connected and what

its relationship is to the next object in position. This awareness gives the individual insight into

what is the true meaning of a subject and what motivates it; and also allows one to see the matter both in its entirety and in its parts. Without order, we are unable to really find a lasting solution for difficult problems. Order gives us the ability to see, to think, to analyze, to solve. A mind in disarray is unable to think through a subject successfully, because it does not really understand it.

Seder, orderliness, was one of the watchwords of Kelm. It was another aspect of the Alter's philosophy of education, which was based upon the complex interplay of thought and action. Improper actions indicated faulty thought. One's external and internal expressions are inextricably linked to one another. By underscoring the need for external order, the Alter believed one could, over time, give structure and order to the internal thought process as well. A lack of external order reveals a cog in one's internal thought process, indicating a lack of structure and methodology in his thoughts. When the Alter visited his son in yeshivah, he first inspected his son's room to ascertain that it was neat and tidy. Then he would greet his son.

Each student in Kelm was assigned a specific place for his possessions, and anyone whose possessions were not neatly arranged or were in the wrong place would incur the aversion of the Alter. Originally, I thought this was taking it too far, but when one analyzes it further, it is apparent that in order to have a precise mind for Torah study, one's external actions must be meticulously structured. This was the type of student the Alter m'Kelm cultivated and developed.

A visitor once entered the Kelm bais hamedrash during one of the Alter's shmuessen, ethical discourses. From the somber tone of the lecture, it appeared that he was delivering a hesped, eulogy. Only midway through the shmuess did the visitor realize that the Alter was not talking about any deceased person. He was, in fact, addressing the fact that a student had placed his galoshes upside down in its assigned compartment. To the Alter, this was an infraction in seder and needed to be seriously addressed. The visitor later reported that the Alter had delivered a hesped over an incorrectly placed pair of galoshes.

The Alter writes: "We have spoken concerning the overriding significance of adhering to seder. It goes so far that a person cannot live one moment without shemiras ha'sedarim, meticulously adhering to order and structure. One who does not do this misses out on everything."

The above gives us insight into the definition of a non-functioning person and why so many distinguished people demand seder in every aspect of their lives. Rav Moshe Pardo, zl, was such a person. First, a little background on Rav Moshe Pardo. Moshe Pardo was a wealthy Jewish businessman in Turkey. He also had a number of orchards near Bnei Brak. This was before Bnei Brak became the bustling city that it is today. He had one daughter, who was engaged to be married. A few weeks before her wedding, she contracted meningitis, which caused her untimely demise. Her father was heartbroken and inconsolable.

He was advised to speak with the Chazon Ish, who was the gadol hador, preeminent Torah leader of the generation. The Chazon Ish and his Rebbeztin had not been blessed with biological children. Rav Moshe told the Chazon Ish that, with the passing of his only child, he had lost his desire to live. "She died. I also want to die," he said.

With his piercing eyes, the Chazon Ish looked at him and said, "It is prohibited for a believing Jew to think like that." He paused a moment and then said, "I will tell you what. You give up your business, Pardo, and you make a school for Sephardic girls. You will see what is taking place here in Bnei Brak. The Sephardic girls are being destroyed. You make a school here; sell some of your orchards and start; I promise you hundreds of children and thousands of grandchildren!"

Rav Pardo accepted the Chazon Ish's advice, and, in 1952, he established Or HaChaim Seminary for girls from kindergarten through high school. The school addresses the needs of girls from disadvantaged homes, who would otherwise probably find themselves on the street. Thus, they are accorded a Jewish education and taught the skills required to earn a livelihood. The school exists today with an enrollment of fifteen hundred students. On the day that Rav Moshe related this story to Rabbi Berel Wein, he pulled out a notebook from his pocket. In it, he had recorded the name of every girl who had attended his school, what had happened with her, and how many children she had. On that day, he told Rabbi Wein, his 4,000th grandchild had been born.

Now that we have his history, let me share one of his primary educational maxims: "A rebbe/morah must be on time." Often when the bell rang, he was found standing in the hall, indicating to his teachers that they were late, that this had better not happen again. Many times, he would emphasize that even a slight tardiness, a few moments, throws off the balance of the class. When the teacher demonstrates a lack of organization, the students immediately sense it. This creates an air of general instability and deficiency within the entire school - all because one teacher has arrived late.

The Torah is firmly entrenched in the concept of punctuality, meticulousness and order. One who performs a prohibited labor on Shabbos, one minute prior to sunset, is liable for the death penalty. If he does so one minute later, he is, of course, exempt, since it has already become a weekday. One minute spells the difference between life and death. A hairbreadth determines whether an animal has been slaughtered properly. One must slaughter *rov*, the majority. One hair breadth beyond the halfway mark renders all the difference in the world. One drop of water spells the difference between a *mikveh* which is kosher and one which has less than forty saah of water, and thus, is not a *mikveh*. The *Machaneh Leviah*, camp reserved for *Shevet Levi*, was separated from *Machaneh Shechinah*, the holy camp, by one step. The list goes on.

One year, prior to the *Yamim Tovim*, High Holy Days, the school sent out *Shanah Tovah*, Happy New Year, cards to its supporters. This mailing was in gratitude of the past support, and a subtle reminder that the school was still in need of funds. The school had a beautiful card printed, and the girls were charged with folding the card, wrapping it in a gold ribbon, and placing it in an envelope. As is usually the case, there was a group of girls who took their work seriously and responded responsibly, folding the card perfectly on the prepared crease and tying the ribbon exactly in the right place. Another group of girls just folded the card and put on a ribbon in a manner that showed they could care less. *Rav Moshe* praised the former group of girls who had meticulously carried out his request. He relieved the other group of girls of their cards and threw them away: "I cannot send such a card to a supporter of the school. It conveys a bad message!"

When the girls complained and demanded a reason for his "putting down" their work, he patiently explained the following: "I knew a man who, for the most part, was in perfect health. He had one slight problem concerning a facial nerve that every once in a while would twitch. As a result, he made an involuntary response with his face every time the nerve twitched. Is this so bad? After all, among tens of thousands of nerves in his face, one nerve was 'loose.' Does this mean that something is wrong?"

When he saw the girls looking at him sympathetically, as if they did not understand the point that he was trying to make, he stopped momentarily, allowing his message to sink in, and continued. The heart is a pump which pumps constantly from the moment a person is born until he takes his last breath. Seventy, eighty, ninety years, without rest, it never stops pumping. What tragedy would there be if it "took it easy" once in a while and stopped a beat here and there? The person would go into cardiac arrest. He might even die! Do you now understand that when perfection is required, there can be no "second best" or "almost" or "not quite" or "most of the time"? Everything in this world is placed by the Almighty in its perfect place. It must function at an optimum level exactly as G-d wanted it to - or else. If this is what is expected from inanimate objects, how much more so from man?"

And it was, in the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, the Mishkan was erected. (40:17)

Sefer Shemos is described by the *Ramban* as *Sefer HaGeulah*, the Book of Redemption. All that is contained therein is *geulah*-related. From the very beginning, when the Jews were enslaved by the Egyptians; to their liberation; followed by the splitting of the Red Sea; and the receiving of the Torah: all led up to the construction of the *Mishkan* for the purpose of *Hashroas HaShechinah*, establishing a resting place for the Divine Presence. *Sefer Vayikra* is where the *avodah*, ritual service, performed in the *Mishkan* is mentioned. Therein the various *Korbanos*, sacrificial offerings, are detailed. It is, therefore, surprising that *Parashas Pikudei* concludes with the *avodah* that *Moshe Rabbeinu* executed in inaugurating the *Mishkan*. *Moshe* had been the *Kohen Gadol* for a week as *Aharon* was being invested with and prepared for the position. Should *Moshe's avodah* not have been included in *Sefer Vayikra* - like all of the other ritual services? Apparently, *Moshe's* use of the vessels is in some

way connected to the *Geulah*. How?

Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita, explains this based upon the *Ramban's* comments in his introduction to *Sefer Shemos*. He writes: "The exile cannot be considered to have ended until *Klal Yisrael* arrived at their place and returned to the prominence of the *Avos*, Patriarchs. Once they received the Torah, built the *Mishkan*, and *Hashem's* Presence dwelled amongst them, they had been restored to the prominence achieved by the Patriarchs. At this point, they had reached the spiritual plateau of - *Elokai alai ahaleihem, 'G-d was upon their tents'* (*Iyov* 29:4), similar to the *Avos* that are themselves the *Merkavah*, chariot, of *Hashem*; *Klal Yisrael* had achieved full redemption. Thus, *Sefer Shemos* concludes with the completion of the *Mishkan*, in which the *Glory of Hashem* was manifest."

Rav Belsky derives a fundamental principle of *Yiddishkeit* from the *Ramban's* words. *Hashroas HaShechinah* was accomplished only through the actual *avodah*. The power invested in the edifice and the holy utensils was awe-inspiring, but

sanctifying the utensils and erecting the *Mishkan* only created the capacity for *kedushah* and a restoration of the Divine Presence among *Klal Yisrael*. Without the *avodah* in full force - everything else remains simply potential. Unless the *kedushah* is actualized, the Divine Presence will not appear and there is no *Geulah*. This is why it was necessary for *Moshe* to actualize the plausible *kedushah* in the vessels of the *Mishkan*. In this manner, he created the spiritual climate intrinsic to allowing *Hashem's* *Glory* to descend upon the *Mishkan*.

Every Jew has the potential to engender incredible *kedushah*. Aptitude is a wonderful asset, but if it does not translate into achievement, it becomes the symbol of a wasted life spent wallowing in "what could have been." A Jew must garner all of his strength to maximize his potential - especially in the area of bringing his inherent *kedushah* to fruition. I say "especially," because if one truly focuses on his *kedushah*, everything else will follow. It will all fit in. The converse does not always work. By drawing out our potential, we are able to transform ourselves into a veritable *Mishkan*, regarding which it says, *V'Shochanti b'socham, "I will reside within them."*

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha Parshas Pekudei
by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Exactly Redundant

In the final Torah portion that details the completion of the *Mishkan*, an expression that describes the accomplishment is repeated over and over. In fact, the descriptive assertion is repeated no less than eighteen times!

After the Torah details the completion of each utensil, component, or vestment necessary to finish the *Mishkan* and begin the service, the Torah uses an expression that declares that they were made "exactly as *Hashem* commanded *Moshe*."

Again and again the Torah repeats the expression almost verbatim. First, the Torah uses the expression in a general sense when telling us how the vestments were made: "exactly as *Hashem* commanded *Moshe*." Then it is used again when detailing each garment. The *Ephod* and its garters, "were made exactly as *Hashem* commanded *Moshe*;" the *Choshen* and its stone setting were made "exactly as *Hashem* commanded *Moshe*."

The same applies to the vessels of the *Mishkan*. In addition to a general statement that everything was crafted "exactly as *Hashem* commanded *Moshe*," the Torah reiterates the expression of perfect conformity in regard to each of the utensils. This goes on for almost every component of the *Mishkan*!

Why? Would it not have been enough to begin or end the summary with one proclamation that everything was crafted "exactly as *Hashem* commanded *Moshe*"? Why restate it so often?

Rabbi Zev Wilenski, shli"ta, recited that a student of *Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebowitz, z"l*, had undertaken to transcribe the notes of the revered sage to prepare them for print. This work would eventually be known as the *Birkas Shmuel*, one of the classic exegetical works on Talmudic Law.

As the student reviewed the work, he noticed a seeming redundancy of the titles mentioned about *Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soleveitchik*, the *Brisker Rav* who was a son of *Rabbi Lebowitz's* own teacher *Rabbi Chaim Soleveitchik*, and revered as well, by *Rabbi Lebowitz*.

Each time that *Rabbi Lebowitz* quoted him, he would preface *Rabbi Soleveitchik's* name with all due titles and accolades, "the true *Gaon*, *Rebbe* and *Teacher* of all of *Israel*, *The Gaon of Brisk*, he should live to see long and good days."

Even three or four times in one paragraph, *Rabbi Lebowitz* would repeat the words, each preceded with a slew of praise and reverence, "the true *Gaon*, *Rebbe* and *Teacher* of all of *Israel*, *The Gaon of Brisk*, he should live to see long and good days."

The next time that *Rabbi Soleveitchik* was quoted in the works, the student, in the interest of brevity, decided to leave out the seemingly supplementary appellations. Instead he wrote, *My Rebbe*, the great sage, *Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soleveitchik, shlit"ta*.

Upon reviewing the work, *Rabbi Lebowitz* was visibly shaken. "Why did you leave off the introductory appellations? "But, *Rebbe*," countered *Rabbi Lebowitz's* student, "I mentioned them the first time. Must I repeat them every single time?" *Rabbi Lebowitz* was dismayed. "Why am I publishing this book?" he asked in true sincerity. "What do I have from it? Honor? Money? Of course not! I wrote this

work so that a student will understand how to learn a Rashba (a medieval commentator) or to understand the Rambam."

He paused. "The same way that I want them to understand the text, I also want them to understand to appreciate the greatness of the Rebbe. I want them to see and understand that Rav Yitzchak Zev is "the true Gaon, Rebbe and Teacher of all of Israel."

Perhaps the lesson imparted by each and every action of the Mishkan warrants the Torah's declaration of perfect conformity for a generalized statement does not impact as much as reiteration.

The Torah is mindful that just as we hammer the facts of dimensions and specifications into our minds, just as we ponder the intricacies of the cups and flowers of the Menorah, the forms and staves of the Table of Showbread, the various stones of the Choshen and their placement inside their settings, so too there is one detail we must not miss. And this detail applies with a freshness for every Mishkan-related activity: each was exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe.

Good Shabbos

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore and the author of the Parsha Parables series.

Questions or comments? Email feedback@torah.org.. Project Genesis, Inc.

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org>

reply-to: ryfrand@torah.org,

to: ravfrand@torah.org

subject: Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Pekudei

The Almighty Likes Humble Buildings and Humble People

Towards the beginning of Parshas Pekudei, the Torah says that the entire weight of all the gold that was dedicated to the Mishkan was 29 Kikar and 730 Shekel [Shmos 38:24]. The Sforno writes that this was a small quantity of gold, relatively speaking. The amount was a small fraction of the gold present in the first Bais HaMikdash built by Shlomo HaMelech, which in turn had a fraction of the gold present in the remodeled second Beis HaMikdash built by Herod. Nevertheless, points out the Sforno, the Presence of the Shechinah in the three Sanctuaries (the Mishkan and the two Batei Mikdash) was inversely proportional to the amount of gold present. The Shechina was most acutely felt in the Mishkan of Moshe, less so in the Mikdash of Shlomo, and far less so in Herod's Bais HaMikdash.

The clear lesson, says the Sforno, is that the grandeur of the wealth or the size of the building is not what determines the Presence of G-d amongst the Jewish people. The beauty of a building has nothing to do with whether the Presence of the Shechinah will reside in that building. The Master of the Universe is not impressed with posh and lavish surroundings. The Mishkan, which was temporary — almost a tent like structure, was a poor man's house and yet the Shechinah was always there. The Almighty does not value such things. What G-d wants is people's feelings and devotion. He is not interested in the surroundings. My purpose in mentioning all this is not to cast aspersions against any congregation with posh design and theater seating. I happen to enjoy comfortable seats. My point is that we should all remember that none of this is what is going to bring down the Shechinah into our synagogues. According to the Sforno writes, the actions and the piety of the people present will bring down the Shechina.

An extension of this is another idea of Chazal: Take heed of the children of poor people (aniyim), for from them will emerge Torah. In this context, 'aniyim' does not merely refer to people who are poor of means. Sometimes we see children who come from backgrounds that are less than stellar and they turn out to be the best students in the Yeshiva. Some of them go on to be great men in Israel.

This is the same thought. They come from humble backgrounds and they are humble people. From them, Torah comes forth. Rav Meir Shapiro once explained that when children from poor families see the sacrifices of their parents to send them to Yeshiva and to afford tuition and the

like, it makes a profound impression on the children. When children are aware of all that sacrifice, they approach their learning differently. The common denominator between the thought regarding the gold in the Mishkan and the students from poor backgrounds is that the Almighty appreciates humble backgrounds.

The Soloveitchik dynasty of Torah greatness is well known in the Yeshiva world. It has transcended many generations and continues to this very day. How did this great Torah dynasty get started? I have seen this story written up in many places, most recently in something I read by Rav Aharon Soloveitchik, zt"l, a member of this Torah dynasty.

The dynasty did not start with a great Talmud Chochom, but with a man who was a great business man, named Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, who lived in the time of Rav Chaim of Volozhin. He was in the lumber business and was a fantastically wealthy individual. He gave vast sums of money to charity on an annual basis. All of a sudden, his business took a turn for the worse and he lost everything.

It was such a shocking setback for the Jewish community that Rav Chaim of Volozhin convened an emergency meeting of the Beis Din in Volozhin to determine what Rav Moshe Soloveitchik did that caused Divine disfavor, such that his business suffered such a dramatic reversal. The Beis Din met and deliberated and the only thing they could come up with was that Rav Moshe Soloveitchik gave away too much money to charity! They ruled that he was in violation of the Talmudic dictum that one is not allowed to give away more than 20% of his income to Tzedakah.

Rav Chaim of Volozhin was not satisfied with the conclusion of this Beis Din. At any rate, Rav Moshe Soloveitchik was out of a job, he was out of his business, and he was bereft of his wealth. What could he do? He started learning. He was obviously a very smart man. He no longer had a business, so he went to the Beis Medrash and he learned with the same diligence and the same acumen that made him into this fantastically wealthy person. He became a tremendous Talmid Chochom in his own right. He was the progenitor of the Soloveitchik Torah dynasty.

After that, Rav Chaim Volozhin said "Now I know why he lost his money. Because of his great merit in giving charity, the Almighty wanted to allow him to have the merit of being the patriarch of a great dynasty of Torah scholarship. But (based on the above quoted teaching of Chazal), it is the children of poor people who have the greatest potential for having Torah issue forth from them. Moshe Soloveitchik had a problem. He was too wealthy to have children who would be great in Torah. He lost his money. He became poor. The rest, as they say, is history." This in fact is the lesson of the Mishkan — the Divine Presence has an affinity for the humble.

'Sitra Achra' Makes Major Effort Fighting Start Of Something Positive

The completed Mishkan was brought to Moshe [Shmos 39:33]. Rashi comments that the people were unable to erect the Mishkan. It was too heavy for them to lift. Since Moshe had not directly participated in the construction of the Mishkan, Hashem allowed him this privilege of being the one to erect it. Moshe, however, asked the Almighty "How is it possible for any person to single-handedly lift up such a massive structure? If all these people together could not put up the Mishkan, how can I do it by myself?" Rashi quotes the Medrash Tanchuma that Hashem answered Moshe: "You make it look like you are lifting the Mishkan, and I will miraculously ensure that it gets lifted by itself." The Bikkurei Avraham asks a basic question: We know that the entire Mishkan was intended to be used as a portable structure. For 39 plus years, they assembled and disassembled and reassembled the Mishkan whenever they traveled from place to place. Nowhere do we ever find that they had trouble putting up the Mishkan. We certainly do not find that each time they came to a new place Moshe Rabbeinu had to do this "trick" of pretending that he was assembling the Mishkan. Why was it

that the first time was different? Why was it that only the first time, no one was able to erect the Mishkan – not even Moshe – to the extent that it needed to be assembled miraculously?

The Zohar writes that on the day the Mishkan was first erected, the 'sitra achra' was defeated. The 'sitra achra' is the Kabbalistic term for the forces of evil in the world. These forces became vanquished and departed from the world. Once the Mishkan was erected, it was erected 'on high' and 'down below'.

"Samael (evil angel) and the 40 chariots that accompany him were also shaken." I don't know what this means and most people don't know what this means. But the point of this Zohar is that when the Mishkan was finally put up, it had this unbelievable effect on the negative and impure forces in the world, the 'sitra achra'.

This explains why it was initially so difficult to put up. There are certain events in human history that are watershed events. The initial assembly was a watershed spiritual event for the Jewish people and for mankind in general. The assembly of the Mishkan triggered the Avodah in the Mishkan and the Divinely commanded sacrificial order and all the holiness and purity that would emanate from this Service.

The Sitra Achra is a wise force. It knows how to pick its battles. Why fight one thousand battles when one can choose a single major battle and win it? That battle was the initial assembly of the Mishkan. Since the Mishkan was going to introduce such holiness and such Divine Service into the world, this was the event into which the Sitra Achra decided to put all his powers and wage his battle. That is why it was initially so hard to assemble, but once it was accomplished it became easier.

The lesson is that whenever one tries to introduce something spiritually worthwhile that is going to have a positive effect on people, it is going to be an extremely hard to get it off the ground. That is why building a shul or mikva or Yeshiva or school or some new organization that is going to help people and add holiness to the world is so challenging. Know that all such attempts will trigger a royal battle. The 'sitra achra' is going to pull out all stops for this very same reason. "If I can stop this, look how many battles I will win down the line!" If a mikva (or anything else of that nature) is going to be built, look how much holiness will be brought into this world. "If I can stop a Yeshiva from being created and there is less Torah in the world, there are hundreds of battles I have won – hundreds of people that will not go to a Yeshiva down the line. If I lose this "startup battle" — the 'sitra achra' fears — look at all the Torah learning and Kedusha that will come into existence."

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"As G-d Commanded Moshe" Rabbi Yakov Haber The TorahWeb Foundation

The recurrent phrase in this week's parasha - "ka'asher tziva Hashem es Moshe" - is repeated no less than eighteen times.[1] The commentaries offer diverse explanations for this phenomenon ranging from technical to halachic to hashkafic. Some distinguish between ourparasha where the phrase appears and parashas VaYakheil where the phrase curiously does not appear.

Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk in his Meshech Chachma explains that the bigdei kehuna described in Pekudei contained sha'atnez - wool and linen - and therefore required special Divine dispensation to wear them. The Mishkan, whose construction is mentioned in VaYakheil, by contrast, even though its curtains also contained sha'atnez, but no regular Torah prohibition was violated since they were

not worn. Hence, the Torah indicates that the Jewish people acted as G-d commanded concerning the bigdei kehuna. Concerning the Mishkan, this was obvious.

Rav Hirsch comments that the Mishkan, a building, was not considered complete until it was totally finished. By contrast, the garments of kohanim were considered complete as each one was finished. Hence, in our parasha, the above-mentioned phrase appears after the formation of each garment indicating its completion and also concerning the completion of the construction of the Mishkan after all of its vessels, walls and curtains were formed (Pekudei 39:42-43).

Beis HaLevi, the first Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik, presents a penetrating analysis of this recurring phrase in two places. In parashas Lech L'cha, Beis HaLevi explains this phrase to indicate that even though an individual is highly intelligent and thinks that he knows the reason why Hashem commanded the mitzva, he should perform it not because of his knowledge of the reason but because of the Divine command itself. Only this attitude is truly Divine service. Performing the mitzva because of our understanding would not be serving G-d but serving ourselves by following our understanding. A similar duality appears in the Gemara Rosh HaShana (16a). After the Gemara questions why we blow the shofar on Rosh HaShana, the Gemara challenges the question: Why do we blow shofar?! Hashem commanded us to blow! Even though ta'amei hamitzvos are often offered by Torah scholars as part of Torah study, the m'chayev, that which obligates us to do the mitzva is certainly not the reason, but rather the Divine command itself (see P'nei Yehoshua). Whether one has an insight into a possible reason or not, he is equally bound by the mitzva because of the Divine commandment.

In parashas Ki Tissa, Beis HaLevi links this concept to the relationship between the Cheit Ha'Eigel and the building of the Mishkan. One opinion in the Midrash followed by Rashi (Ki Tissa 31:18) states that Hashem commanded Moshe concerning the Mishkan only after the Cheit Ha'Eigel. Thus, the construction of the Mishkan atoned for the sin of the Golden Calf. Beis HaLevi explains that each mitzva has enormous spiritual, inner depth and this is certainly so for the Mishkan and Mikdash which "houses" the Divine Presence in some mysterious way. One knowledgeable of this depth of Torah might be tempted to utilize his knowledge to create some entity which will bring down the Divine Presence without following any specific Divine commandment. This is what B'nei Yisrael attempted to do in forming the Eigel. (See Midrash quoted by Ramban (32:1) that they were inspired to make an image of the Eigel having witnessed the image of an ox in the Merkava vision they experienced at Har Sinai (see Yechezkel 1:10).) Their grievous error lay in the fact that only G-d determines what form of worship is appropriate and what kind of structure and vessels would be a correct form to "house" the Shechina. K'lal Yisrael in constructing the Mishkan atoned for their great sin by not diverging one iota from the Divine command and building it because of G-d's command, not based on their insights into its enormous spiritual significance. Creating alternate forms of worship based on the perceived reasons for mitzvos is sinful and can even lead, as it did in the case of the Eigel, to idolatry.

Perhaps we can connect all of the approaches given above as follows. Divine service is itself a big mystery. How can finite man serve the infinite Creator? As the Midrash (B'reishis Rabba 44:1) teaches, G-d is not affected by our service of Him. Nonetheless, Hashem Yisborach in His Infinite Wisdom provides for us a means with which to serve Him and elevate ourselves through that service. The unifying factor of all of these approaches is that only G-d can command how His creations should serve and thereby connect to the Infinite One.

When should one mitzva override another? Only the Torah itself can determine that. This is Meshech Chachma's teaching - the overriding of the law of sha'atnez is only "as G-d commanded Moshe." What if we think we know the reason for a mitzva - shouldn't it be performed because of that reason? This is what Beis HaLevi teaches: our performance of mitzvos is in order to follow the Divine command. The reasons can enhance but should never motivate the "mitzva act".[2] What if we come up with a new mode of service? This is the second teaching of Beis HaLevi: only G-d can determine the mode of service appropriate.

But G-d also commanded the Chachmei HaDor to create safeguards to the Torah and even add Rabbinic mitzvos.[3] Ran (D'rashos 7) teaches that these serve as expressions of ahavas Hashem and yir'as Hashem demonstrating that we do not wish to suffice with just the minimum requirements and also wish to safeguard our precious heritage. However, since we cannot choose to serve the Almighty in a way he has not commanded, the Chachmei HaDor must have enormous insight as to what kinds of Rabbinic safeguards and Rabbinic mitzvos would "blend in" with the rest of the Torah and which would be foreign intrusions into the Torah system. Our sages teach us "kol d'tikkun Rabbanan k'ein d'Oraisa tikkun". All Rabbinic enactments follow Torah patterns. To do so properly requires absolute mastery of the Torah far beyond that which ordinary Torah scholars possess.

Recent controversies have erupted concerning what modes of avodas Hashem are appropriate and which are not. Our parasha resonates again and again with the slogan - "ka'asher tziva Hashem es Moshe." Make sure that everything is in accordance with this directive! But how are we to know Hashem's Will in an era when we can no longer ask Moshe Rabbeinu to receive direct instructions from the Almighty? The answer is contained in the Torah's directive "ki yipalei mim'cha davar lamishpat...v'asisa k'chol asher yorucha" (Shof'tim 17:8-10). Follow the interpretations and rulings of the Sanhedrin and in subsequent eras the G'dolei Chachmei haDor (see Seifer haChinuch (495) that this verse applies for all generations) who will be given Divine assistance to determine which mode blends in with the Torah and which does not. May the Nosein HaTorah continue to grant the Chachmei haDor the wisdom to guide us in following His will and Am Yisrael the desire to loyally follow their guidance.

[1] Be'er Moshe by R. Moshe Yechiel HaLevi of Ozhorov suggests the Moshe Rabbeinu who was willing to give up his life for K'lal Yisrael merited "chai" mentionings of this phrase referencing his role as the sh'liach of Hashem indicating his eternal life and legacy.

[2] See Rav Y. D. Soloveitchik's shiur on the Korach Rebellion available at www.bcbm.org.

[3] The important distinction between the Sages until the chasimas haTalmud and those after that time is beyond the scope of our limited words here. But even current Chachmei HaDor are charged to make limited takkanos to preserve the Torah's integrity.

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Personal Supplications on Shabbos and Yom Tov

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question # 1: Harachaman Hullabaloo

"I know that on Shabbos some people do not recite the harachamans at the end of benschung, but I was raised saying them. Am I doing something wrong?"

Question #2: The Monotonous Mishebeirach Mode

lam Impatient calls me with the following question: "Can we do anything to reduce the number of mishebeirachs in our shul? It is taking longer and longer, and I find the delay quite disturbing."

Questions #3 and 4:

Kibud Av versus Kavod Shabbos

Michal's father is ill and asks her to arrange a minyan to daven on his behalf on Shabbos. May she?

On Shabbos morning, Shlomo asks the shul's gabbai. "My father will be having surgery this week. Can we say a chapter of Tehillim on his behalf, after davening, when everyone is still in shul?"

Answer:

In several places, the Gemara mentions that one may not pray for individual needs on Shabbos (e.g., Taanis 19a; Bava Basra 91a; Yerushalmi, Shabbos, 15:3). At least two reasons are quoted for this prohibition. Some sources include it under what the Navi Yeshaya (58:13) commanded when he declared, Vechibadto mei'asos derachecha, mimetzo cheftzecha vedabeir davar, "You shall honor the Shabbos by not performing your own matters, seeking out your own needs and speaking of them" (Vayikra Rabbah 34:16; Rashba, Shabbos 113a). This proscription is usually simply called dabeir davar.

A second opinion

Others prohibit praying for personal requests on Shabbos because it violates one's oneg Shabbos. Praying for personal needs causes one to focus on what troubles him, which leads a person to be sorrowful (see Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:12 and Ran, Shabbos, Rif page 5b). Shabbos is to be a day of joy.

According to both reasons, dabeir davar and oneg Shabbos, we now understand why, on Motza'ei Shabbos, we insert the passage atah chonantanu, which is a declaration of havdalah ending Shabbos, in the fourth brocha of shemoneh esrei, which is the first of the weekday brachos. The reason is that we may not recite the middle brachos of the shemoneh esrei until we have recited havdalah (Yerushalmi, Brachos end of 5:2; Shu't HaRashba #739; Magen Avraham 294:1). Someone who forgot to recite atah chonantanu and realizes while in the middle of shemoneh esrei may continue the shemoneh esrei, but should not add any personal supplications to his prayer.

"Provide us, sustain us..."

If personal supplications are prohibited on Shabbos, how can we say in our benschung the personal requests to Hashem "Provide us, sustain us..."? The same question exists in many of the prayers that we recite on Shabbos, such as the parts

of the morning birchos hashachar that include supplications. How are we permitted to recite these brachos on Shabbos?

This question is asked in the Talmud Yerushalmi, which I quote:

We learned: It is prohibited to pray for one's needs on Shabbos. Rabbi Ze'eira asked Rabbi Chiya bar Abba, "When reciting the benschung, may one say 'Tend to us, feed us, provide us with livelihood' [re'einu, zuneinu, paneseinu in the third brocha]?" Rabbi Chiya bar Abba answered him that this is permitted because this is the standard structure of the brocha (Yerushalmi, Shabbos 15:3).

Thus, the Yerushalmi introduces a new idea: that something that is a standard part of a regular tefillah or brocha may be recited on Shabbos, a concept called tofeis brocha. For this reason, we do not modify the words of benschung or the other brachos that we usually recite.

What is the logic behind permitting tofeis brocha? This is still a request that should be prohibited for one of the two reasons mentioned above.

I found three interpretations to explain why we may recite a prayer that is included in a tofeis brocha.

I. Distorted brachos

The Korban HaEidah, one of the standard commentaries on the Yerushalmi, explains that tofeis brocha is permitted because of concern that changing the wording on Shabbos might cause one to get confused and recite the entire brocha incorrectly.

II. Changing the nusach

The Rivash (Shu't HaRivash #512) explains the reason to permit tofeis brocha is because one does not change a text established by Chazal. Thus, the prohibition against making personal requests on Shabbos never applied to standard texts. The Rivash then extends this idea even to selichos and piyutim – and it is for this reason that we recite these passages when Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur fall on Shabbos using the same text as we do when Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur fall on a weekday.

III. Familiarity breeds content

Others provide yet a third reason to explain why one may recite a supplication that is incorporated in a tofeis brocha: because something that one says regularly does not cause him suffering (Kuntrus Bakashos BeShabbos, page 3, quoting Yafeh Mareh and Atares Paz 1:2:2). This approach assumes that the reason we may not pray for personal supplications on Shabbos is not because of the takkanah of dabeir davar but only because of the reason of oneg Shabbos.

Harachaman hullabaloo

At this point, we can already discuss the first question raised above:

"I know that on Shabbos some people do not recite the harachamans at the end of benschung, but I was raised saying them. Am I doing something wrong?"

No, you are in good company with fine poskim. The Mishnah Berurah (188:9) rules that one may recite the harachamans on Shabbos – they are also considered tofeis brachos.

Some authorities extend the lenience of tofeis brocha considerably, ruling that the prohibition against reciting supplications on Shabbos applies only to a prayer that one constructs oneself, but does not apply to any standardized prayer (Shu't Rav Pe'alim, Orach Chayim 2:46). However, many of the sources cited in this article do not seem to accept this approach. Also, Shu't Yosef Ometz #44 seems to reject it, since he questions how one can recite on Shabbos Brich Shmei when removing the sefer Torah from the aron hakodesh, since this prayer includes personal supplications. The question is moot according to the approach of the Rav Pe'alim. Pikuach nefesh

Aside from the situation of tofeis brachos, there is another case when one may recite personal supplications on Shabbos, and that is when the situation is one of pikuach nefesh, life-threatening emergency. Just as saving lives supersedes Shabbos and most mitzvos of the Torah, one is permitted to pray for deliverance when faced by an immediate life-threatening emergency. For example, the Mishnah (Taanis 19a) teaches that one prays that Hashem save the people when a city is surrounded by invaders, when a river overflows, or when a boat is floundering at sea.

Praying for an individual's deliverance in a life-threatening circumstance supersedes Shabbos when it is a sakanas hayom – a circumstance that presents an immediate, life-threatening emergency (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 288:9, 10). Therefore, if someone is very seriously ill and his life is in immediate danger, we say Tehillim and pray on his behalf, even on Shabbos. However, if the person is seriously ill but not in immediate danger, we do not say Tehillim for him on Shabbos, but wait until after Shabbos. Thus, the Mishnah Berurah (288:28) rules that a woman giving birth or a woman who gave birth within the past week are both considered sakanas hayom, and one may pray for them on Shabbos.

Out-of-town III

Is one permitted to daven on Shabbos for an ill person who is not in my city? Why does it make a difference where the ill person is?

Some authorities contend that since one does not know if his condition is a *sakanas hayom*, these prayers might be desecrating Shabbos unnecessarily (Maharil, cited by Machatzis HaShekel 288:14). The accepted practice follows those who permit these prayers, considering them a *safek pikuach nefesh* (Nachalas Shivah).

Can I get rid of all those *mishebeirachs*?

At this point, let us examine the second of our opening questions, from *I am Impatient*.

“Can we do anything to reduce the number of *mishebeirachs* in our shul? It is taking longer and longer, and I find the delay quite disturbing.”

I mentioned above the dispute as to whether the prohibition of personal supplications on Shabbos is because of the law of *dabeir davar*, meaning that one should not discuss this-worldly matters on Shabbos, or it is because of *oneg Shabbos* -- praying for personal needs may cause one to become sorrowful. Is there any difference in halachah between the two reasons?

Indeed, there are some differences in halachah that result from this disagreement. One dispute that results is germane to whether one may recite a *mishebeirach* for an ill person on Shabbos. The standard text for this *mishebeirach* when recited on a weekday includes a short prayer that the ill person have a complete recovery.

Logically, it should be prohibited to recite this on Shabbos, since it is a private request. Yet, some early authorities rule that when the ill person is not nearby, one may recite these *mishebeirachs* on Shabbos, reasoning that one does not become sorrowful when reciting a *mishebeirach* for someone not present (*responsum* of Rav Yaakov Beirav, in *Shu't Avkas Rocheil* #11). This line of reasoning assumes that the prohibition of praying for personal requests on Shabbos is because it causes suffering.

However, several other authorities prohibit reciting a *mishebeirach* for ill people on Shabbos, expressly stating that it is forbidden because of *dabeir davar* (*She'eilas Yaavetz* #64; *Gra'z*, *Orach Chayim* 288:9). The *She'eilas Yaavetz* prohibits reciting a *mishebeirach* for the ill on Shabbos except for a *choleh* who is in the category of *sakanas hayom*. He also prohibits reciting these *mishebeirachs* for an additional reason that will make *I am* happy: *Yaavetz* contends that they are prohibited because they inconvenience the community by delaying the services (*tircha de'tzibura*).

A compromise position rules that one may recite a *mishebeirach* for ill people on Shabbos provided that one modifies the text: instead of closing with a prayer for a swift recovery, one blesses the ill person, and then makes a statement that on Shabbos we are not permitted to cry out, but recovery is soon to come (*Magen Avraham* 288:14).

The prevalent custom in most places today follows the last approach, and that is why, in many shullen, *mishebeirachs* are recited for the ill even when it is not a *sakanas hayom*. Of course, this ruling, which is probably the practice in *I am's* shul, is what is upsetting him.

Some authorities add an additional factor in favor of the reciting of the *mishebeirach*: it is considered a special merit to pray for someone during, or immediately after, the reading of the Torah. To quote the *Aruch HaShulchan* (*Yoreh Deah* 335:12): “If one has a family member who is ill... the custom is to pray in shul during *kerias haTorah* for those who are sick, for then Divine Compassion is aroused.”

In answer to what is the best thing to do, I refer to a *responsum* of an earlier authority, the *Rivash* (*Shu't HaRivash* #512) on a related topic: whether one should recite *Avinu Malkeinu* on Shabbos of Rosh Hashanah, Shabbos Shuvah and Yom Kippur. After noting different customs that he saw in several communities, and explaining the reasons why reciting *Avinu Malkeinu* on Shabbos does or does not violate the prohibition against reciting personal requests on Shabbos, he concludes that one should follow the prevalent local custom. Similarly, regarding whether one recites a *mishebeirach* on Shabbos, one should follow the community or shul custom.

May I pray for personal spiritual requests?

The *Mishnah Berurah* (288:22) permits praying on Shabbos for spiritual help or for any other request that is not a result of difficult circumstances. It seems that this should be permitted according to both reasons mentioned above. According to the first reason, one should not pray on Shabbos about one's own needs, but spiritual needs are Hashem's realm. According to the second reason, most people do not become saddened regarding their spiritual failings and “troubles.”

Based on the above, on Shabbos one may recite the prayer of Rav Nechunia ben Hakanah requesting divine assistance for one's Torah learning (*Halichos Shlomoh*, 14:11).

Yom Tov versus Shabbos

Does the prohibition against requesting personal supplications apply only on Shabbos, or does it apply equally on Yom Tov? This topic is discussed by the halachic authorities in a variety of places.

The *Magen Avraham* (128:70) notes that although the custom among Ashkenazim outside Eretz Yisroel is to duchen only on Yom Tov, some communities do not duchen when Yom Tov falls on Shabbos. He suggests the reason for this practice is because the members of the congregation recite the prayer for bad dreams when the *kohanim* duchen, and that, if the *kohanim* duchen on Shabbos, people will say this prayer on Shabbos, which violates the prohibition against reciting personal supplications. The *Magen Avraham* states that although this prayer is recited on Yom Tov, Chazal were less concerned about reciting personal tefillos on Yom Tov than they were on Shabbos, as evidenced by the fact that we omit reciting the prayer *Avinu Malkeinu* on Rosh Hashanah when it falls on Shabbos, yet we recite it when Rosh Hashanah falls on a weekday. We could similarly demonstrate this difference between Yom Tov and Shabbos from the fact that we recite certain personal requests and the thirteen *midos* of Hashem when we take out the *sefer Torah* on Yom Tov, but refrain from reciting these prayers when Yom Tov falls on Shabbos.

However, the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 576:12) implies that there is no difference between Yom Tov and Shabbos -- that personal requests are prohibited equally on both days, a position reiterated by other later authorities (*Shu't Rav Pe'alim* 2:46). It appears that Ashkenazim follow the ruling of the *Magen Avraham* and are more lenient on Yom Tov, whereas Sefardim are stricter about reciting personal requests on Yom Tov.

Kibud Av versus *Kavod Shabbos*

At this point, I would like to address the third question asked above: “*Michal's* father asks her to arrange a *minyán* to daven on his behalf on Shabbos. May she?” To answer this question, I refer to a *responsum* on a related topic from Rav Moshe Feinstein.

On the last day of Pesach, someone who was seriously ill, but not a *sakanas hayom*, requested that the members of a shul pray on his behalf. They then recited a few chapters of *Tehillim* on his behalf and recited the appropriate prayer. After Yom Tov, they were able to ask Rav Moshe whether they had done the correct thing. Rav Moshe ruled that although this was not a *sakanas hayom*, since the ill person himself had requested that they pray on his behalf and he was in a situation of general *pikuach nefesh*, they were correct in praying on his behalf. Although ordinarily one may not pray on someone's behalf if it is not a *sakanas hayom*, in this situation we do pray on his behalf out of concern that he would become upset if we do not, which could aggravate his precarious condition. This concept is called *shelo tirof daato*, that the ill person not become distressed, and is used in several different contexts of halachah.

However, Rav Moshe notes, this ruling applies only when the ill person himself made the request. If family members ask that people pray on his behalf on Shabbos, one should not accede to their request, if it is not a case of *sakanas hayom* (*Shu't Igros Moshe*, *Orach Chayim* 1:105).

At this point, I would like to refer to the last question I raised above: “On Shabbos morning, Shlomoh asks the shul's *gabbai*. “My father will be having surgery this week. Can we say a chapter of *Tehillim* on his behalf after davening when everyone is still in shul?”

The answer to the question is that since there is no *sakanas hayom* here and the ill person himself was not the source of the request, one should not say *Tehillim* and daven for him until after Shabbos.

Conclusion

The words of Yeshaya that include the words *dabeir davar* are read as part of the haftarah that we recite on Yom Kippur. There the Navi concludes, “If you remove your internal yoke from yourself, pointing fingers at one another and [engaging in] evil speech... then Hashem will always guide you... if you refrain from attending to your matters on My holy day... you honor it by not performing your own matters, seeking out your own needs and speaking of them. Then you will delight with Hashem and I will mount you on the highest places on Earth. I will feed you the heritage of your father Yaakov, for Hashem has spoken.”